

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT PRIORITY

SECDEF

JCS

DA WASHDC

USCINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 230722

BEIRUT FOR USDAO AND CHARGE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, PFOR, LE, US

SUBJECT:FY 77 IMET PROGRAM--LEBANON

1. AS YOU AWARE, LEBANESE FY 76 MAP TRAINING STUDENTS WHO COMPLETED U.S. MILITARY TRAINING IN LAST FEW MONTHS ARE EXPERIENCING CONSIDERABLE PERSONAL AND FINANCIAL PROBLEMS. THESE PROBLEMS BROUGHT ABOUT INTER ALIA BY FOLLOWING CIRCUMSTANCES:

A. STUDENT RELUCTANCE TO RETURN HOME UPON COMPLETION OF TRAINING BECAUSE OF UNSETTLED CONDITIONS IN LEBANON;

B. AFTER TRAINING IS COMPLETED, STUDENT IS NO LONGER UNDER DOD SPONSORSHIP AND IS NOT ELIGIBLE FOR MAP LIVING ALLOWANCE

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OR DOD ID CARD AND ACCOMPANYING PRIVILEGES;

C. BREAKDOWN OF LEBANESE SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS, INCLUDING PAYMENT OF ADEQUATE LIVING ALLOWANCE/SALARY, PROVIDED BY GOL THROUGH EMBASSY/DEFENSE ATTACHE IN WASHINGTON;

D. STUDENTS GENERALLY NOT PERMITTED TO WORK DUE TO THEIR VISA STATUS.

2. WE HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO TRACK ALL SUCH STUDENTS; SEVERAL ARE STILL IN THE U.S. IN A "LIMBO" STATUS ON EXTENDED LEAVE GRANTED BY EMBASSY. OTHERS HAVE DEPARTED U.S. EITHER TO TRY AND WORK THEIR WAY BACK TO LEBANON OR TO JOIN RELATIVES IN EUROPE OR AFRICA. IN ALL CASES, STUDENTS HAVE UNDERGONE A FAIRLY TRAUMATIC EXPERIENCE AND MOST HAVE INDICATED FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES AS WELL AS LACK OF SUPPORT FROM THE LEBANESE EMBASSY.

3. IN VIEW OF THE EXPERIENCE OF THE FY 76 STUDENTS, THE UNSETTLED CONDITIONS IN LEBANON, AND THE REDUCTION OF THE USDAO AND EMBASSY STAFFS, WE RECOMMEND THAT THE FY 77 IMET PROGRAM FOR LEBANON BE TEMPORARILY SUSPENDED UNTIL THERE IS AN ACCEPTABLE RESOLUTION OF THE INTERNAL STRIFE AND A RESPONSIVE GOVERNMENTAL MECHANISM CAN BE IDENTIFIED THIS SUSPENSION WILL AFFECT ONLY THE DISTRIBUTION OF TRAINING SLOTS WITHIN THE WORLD-WIDE IMET PROGRAM AND NOT RPT NOT THE AVAILABILITY OF IMET FUNDS (\$.2 MILLION FOR FY 77 FOR LEBANON ONCE SUITABLE CONDITIONS FOR A RESUMPTION OF THE PROGRAM EXIST. WHEN POSSIBLE, WE WISH TO BE IN A POSITION TO RESPOND RAPIDLY AND POSITIVELY TO TRAINING REQUESTS THAT WILL CONTRIBUTE TO THE REBUILDING OF NATIONAL LEBANESE ARMED FORCES. SUCH A SUSPENSION WOULD APPEAR TO BE IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF BOTH GOVERNMENTS AS WELL AS THE INDIVIDUAL STUDENTS.

4. COORDINATED WITH DOD. ROBINSON

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